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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1869.

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To the Editor of the "Musical World."

SIR,—Will you permit me, as an eye-and-ear-witness, to offer in your pages a few remarks on the "Eisteddfod," or Bardic Congress, held in August, 1864, at Llandudno? The subject is one of interest to thousands who, enthusiastic about preserving intact "Yr Jaith Cymruag," and the nationality of the Welsh, and crying loudly for a University for Wales, Welsh bishops, a return to the old Welsh judicature, and even a recognition of the laws of Hywel Dda, are nevertheless extremely glad to have the *Musical World* to read, and to be able to read it without the aid of a Welsh translation.

My points are that this meeting is not what it pretends to be; that, instead of assisting the struggling talent of the Welsh, it, on the whole, retards progress; and that what good it does is disfigured by a nonsensical ceremonial.

If there is any foundation for the legends that a meeting of bards used annually to be held to adjudicate on poetical and artistic compositions—and I do not deny that such legends may be true—it must be also true that the meeting was of imperial consequence, and that its operations were not confined to a small district like the Principality; the language in which its deliberations were carried on was the language of the nation, and the subjects of its arguments were of national importance. So far as art was concerned, the Eisteddfod must have been the only institution in which it was recognized as a subject of study, and although music was doubtless cultivated to a considerable extent in the establishments of the great, it was in this Bardic Congress, if anywhere, that its rules were defined, and study enforced before honour could be attained in it. It is true that the history of the Eisteddfod is far from clear; before the time of Queen Elizabeth there is scarcely a reliable record to be found, and the regulations attributed to Prince Griffith ap Cynau smack of an age long subsequent to the era of the Norman conquest of England. The records both of Griffith's rules and Elizabeth's relate to music only. Even the bards of the present day are not agreed as to the antiquity of Aneurin, Taliesin, or of the poem of the Gododin; how, then, can they claim to follow not only in principle, but in detail, the ancient Gorsedd and Eisteddfod? The very existence of the Druids has been denied, and, in the face of all that has been elaborated and written on the subject, we cannot take the doings of an arch-Druid of 1864 as evidence of the truth of the speculations in "*Mona antiqua Restaurata*." When one chairman says, "The Eisteddfod which we celebrate to-day is an exact counterpart of that which our ancestors celebrated 600 years ago;" when another chairman tells us much the same thing, varying the figures to 1200, are we to accept that as proof of what very able scholars have altogether denied? Of course, no one can object to the assumption by those who are content so to assume, that the present bards have been regularly "ordained," and duly represent the bards of legend; but in the face of the silence of centuries it appears somewhat hardly to expect other people to accept that view.

The Llandudno Eisteddfod of 1864 was held in a very admirably constructed wooden building—and by no means in the open air—and had revived (said a president) "an interest for Celtic history and Celtic antiquities;" had for its object (says the committee) "the diffusion of useful knowledge, the eliciting of native talent, and the cherishing of love of home, and honourable fame, by the cultivation of poetry, music, and art." To these desirable ends a sum of £300 had been applied by the committee, and some £50 more by private individuals in connection with them, to give prizes for historical, musical, and poetical contests, both by way of composition and of performance, more than fifty subjects being stated, and contests occurring in about forty cases. Three prizes were offered for painting and drawing, but for the principal one there was no candidate. A geological essay was sent by one person only, a surveyor, and he took the prize. Three competed on "Agriculture," and one of them, an experienced doctor, took the prize. Essays on "Punctuality" and "Female Education" were the only other prose studies invited by the committee, and each produced about a dozen "theses." That is all that was done for "useful knowledge," exclusive of music and poetry.

I found a large sum of money offered in prizes for poetical effusions. I heard from one of the speakers that it was chiefly from the labouring classes that compositions were expected, and I wondered what was the use of inciting them to make doggerel; of flattering them that they were all born poets; of suggesting, by example, that poetry was a fit vehicle for fulsome compliment. The style of poetry desired may be learnt from the aspirations of one speaker, that Mr. Tennyson may be "awakened from his present heavy sleep;" and from the enthusiastic reception given to a poetical address by one of the bards present, critically described as "a sky-rocket, striking fire in all directions." For one of the principal poetical prizes but a single candidate offered himself, and he was unworthy. Some of the competitors for the "chair" prize—the greatest honour—were said by the judges to have more of Billingsgate than Parnassus in their diction. I maintain that such studies as these do positive harm, taking up the time which should be more usefully applied, and encouraging a low and narrow standard for poetry and poetical taste. In the course of the meeting two great points were made for nationality—the manufacture of epigrammatic stanzas, many of them impromptu,* and the singing of

alternate verses, supposed to be improvised, to a melody selected and performed by a harper. These mental and vocal exercises may do something to "cherish a love of home," not being appreciable elsewhere; but I deny altogether that they tend to improve taste, to extend knowledge, or to achieve "honourable fame," especially as most of the epigrams and short pieces were on subjects of most unpoetical nature. There were fifty-three on "The Leek," and a large number personal and complimentary.

A philological study of value might have been made of some of these, as alliteration has much to do with the Welsh "Englyn;" and the occasional addresses in Welsh of that very able song-writer and fluent speaker known as "Talhaiarn" exhibited an extraordinary acquaintance with the alliterative and epigrammatic uses of his native language. All the speakers deprecated the notion that the meeting desired to uphold the Welsh language at the expense of the English, but it was obvious that these studies, confined exclusively to Welsh, led to excluding the study of English, and not only of English but of Latin and French. Only one subject out of all the list tended to encourage the study of both Welsh and English, and that was a translation into Welsh of *Hamlet*. The prize was offered by a stranger, and not by the National Committee, and there was only one candidate, a printer, whose translation is pronounced by very competent judges to be excellently well done. Encourage the study of Welsh by all means, the language is ancient and vigorous, and shows no symptom of decay; translate into Welsh all the best books that can be found; reprint all Welsh historical works that exist in print or manuscript, I would say; but cease these absurd laudations of that language above all others, and this almost exclusive application of it in original writings to vapouring rhapsody and empty "poetry."

In music the Eisteddfod does good by calling for manuscript exercises, in the form of "original" glees, psalm-tunes, and anthems; and here the committee met with ready response, especially, as might be expected among a people peculiarly religious as the Welsh are, in the case of the psalm-tunes. The judges reported favourably on the compositions sent in to them, and their opinion that the amount of musical knowledge brought to bear was "satisfactory" and "promising" must have been gratifying not only to the supporters of the Eisteddfod, but to all who love refinement. It is very well known that the people of Wales are musical, and that nearly every village has its choral meetings or its band. Yet for the choral competitions at Llandudno no candidates appeared; only one brass band; only one set of glee singers, who were rejected as unworthy of the prize; only one harmonium player; two young harpists, one already under the protection and assistance of the committee; and a few solo and duet singers, one of whom was at this meeting promised by two enthusiastic ladies a fund to provide a year's tuition at the Royal Academy of Music, London. In matters musical the operations of the Eisteddfod thus bear fruit, because music is the language of all time and of all nations. This, or any other society, may find out a deserving subject and remove him or her beyond the reach of local prejudice and narrow provincial views to some seat of learning, where the best use will be made of the talent thus discovered and assisted. The results of such study and training away from Wales appeared in the excellent concerts which were given during the meeting, the principal performers at which, with two exceptions were natives of the Principality.

In one of their addresses the committee stated that, "while the national peculiarities of other portions of the island had been industriously explored, Cambria was regarded with an indifference quite inconsistent with the enterprising spirit by which the literary public of Great Britain is known to be animated." That is very true. Wales abounds with ancient manuscripts written in that language which is one of the main objects of the Eisteddfod to preserve. Three patriotic men preserved some hundreds of pieces in the three volumes of the *Myfyrian Archaeology*, printed at their own expense. Attempts have been made at different times by private persons and publishing societies to preserve other of these manuscripts. Some of them have been included in the series of memorials now in course of publication by Messrs. Longman; but the material is by no means exhausted; a great field for useful study still remains unopened up, and, as the speeches at recent Eisteddfods show, men are content to talk in platitudes about the Druids and the ancient bards of the Cymrw, without acknowledging the doubts long since thrown upon such matters, and without an endeavour to ascertain the truth. Not one prize did the Llandudno Eisteddfod offer for research into Welsh or any other history. Two strangers presented each a premium, the one for an essay on "Creuddyn, its Traditionary and Legendary Lore," the other on "Creuddyn, its History, &c., and its three Ancient Churches." To these prizes the council of the Eisteddfod certainly added a medal. Only one competitor, however, appeared for each, and the same gentleman wrote both the essays and took both the prizes. Creuddyn is the district in which Llandudno lies, and the writer of these essays—the only step towards history made during the week—was a local antiquary and author long and favourably known to fame, who certainly never waited for the inducements of the Eisteddfod to investigate the history of his native land. That genealogy formed no branch of the studies favoured by the council appeared from one of their addresses to the President, containing a palpable blunder about his family—which he corrected. Surely there is an opening for study more worthy encouragement than the art of playing upon the words of any language.

But if in the internal operations of these characteristic gatherings be found

* Englynion.

matter for objection, what is to be said to the proceedings at the "Gorsedd"—to the placing in an open street of a circle of limestones and an artificial cromlech, and to the enacting there certain ceremonies professedly in imitation of the mythical Druids? The ceremony of chairing the principal prizeman and holding a drawn sword over his head is strange, but the game of Druids played outside is a theme I hardly dare approach. A prayer was offered; and even that was made the subject of a laugh by a London correspondent, misled by the fantastic proceedings of the "Gorsedd."

Far be it from me to ridicule or in any manner oppose the objects for which the Eisteddfod is said to be maintained. The meeting is not necessary to foster a "love of home," or a desire for "honourable fame." Those inclinations lie deep in all our hearts, English or Welsh. That it has assisted in drawing out and encouraging the already well-developed taste for music among the Welsh cannot be denied; but that any other good results from such meetings I, for one, gravely doubt. Societies for the encouragement of study, especially of the study of science and art, are common all over Britain, and it may be a good idea to adapt the Eisteddfod to similar use in Wales, where the extensive use of the Cymric language has to be utilized; but surely it is not necessary to keep up a fanciful ceremonial for this purpose. That many of the addresses made by experienced speakers on such occasions are clever, witty, and sometimes interesting, all must admit; but that they are, on the whole, edifying, many doubt, and hesitate when asked to point out the instruction they contain. Surely the inadequate schools in Wales would offer a more useful field of action to those enthusiastic ladies and gentlemen who expend so much money and such energy upon the meetings of the Eisteddfod; and that, too, without the constant reference to the "Saxon," who is now almost as great a myth as the Druid, and to an independent Welsh Nationality, which at the present day is no more distinct from the great English nation than are the men of Kent. When a meeting of the extent and importance (in point of the numbers and position of those who attend it) of that on which I offer these remarks is held as representing the entire remnant of the Cymric nation, it is merely worthy of the attentive consideration of us all; and those who have a decided opinion upon the subject cannot do harm by assisting in the discussion of the points raised in such consideration. With this apology for addressing myself to you, I sign myself, Sir, your obedient servant,

TADCASTLIAN.

[Les "Eisteddfodau" se suivent et se ressemblent. We all remember the Eisteddfod of 1867, described so elaborately and at such painful length by some correspondents sent down expressly to Caermarthen by the *Times* and other London papers. Well, where is the difference between Caermarthen and Llandudno? Irish "Echo" answers "Nowhere."—A. S. S.]

A MARRIAGE AT SÈVRES.

Mdlle. Desirée Artôt, the accomplished vocalist, is no more, and all her friends are delighted at this consummation. The lady that was so known is now Madame Padilla y Ramos. Last week, the little town of Sèvres was all alive with the event,—at which authors, artists, vocalists, journalists and friends from both sides of the Channel were present. Sèvres looked on the marriage procession with as much delight as if it had been an imperial cortege. It was a real *mariage d'artistes*. The bride needs no chronicling. The bridegroom is a baritone, with a voice said to resemble Graziani's, and of which we shall be able to judge sooner or later. He is a Spaniard, and had for best man the distinguished *publiciste*, the Chevalier Soriano. The harmony in the church will prove, we hope, the prelude of that which is to follow. Mdlle. Zeiss sang two religious pieces with remarkable effect. Jourdan, whose voice is described as being what it was when he created *Quentin Dureward*, sang an "O salutaris" of Adam and an "Agnus Dei" of Mozart. The organ was under the hand of a master—Gevaert—who, at the wedding feast which succeeded, and when proposing the health of the Belgian bride and Spanish bridegroom, employed an illustration from history, saying that "Spain and Belgium had rarely met on friendly ground," and that "the present union pacifically avenged the Belgium of the Duke of Alba."

When we add, that Madame Padilla is the niece of the painter Bagniet, so well known and esteemed in England as well as abroad, and that at this brilliant wedding among the guests were Henry Berthoud, Henri Monnier, M. and Madame Dufour, Mdlle. Zeiss, M. and Madame Charton-Demeur, M. and Madame Baugnet, M. and Madame Artôt, M. and Madame Frégnas, Messrs. Gevaert, Florent, Willems, Charles Yriarte, Brocheton, Armand Gouzien, De Lauzières and Mr. (Henry) Bicknell, one of Baugnet's earliest friends in England, and we are well authorized in adopting the phrase of the *Gaulois* with regard to this ceremony, calling it a "*mariage artistique*." The bride's pretty villa, built by her, adjacent to that of her uncle, M. Baugnet, on the hill of Sèvres, is the new home for the new life there inaugurated.

C.

CARLSRUHE.—Auber's *Premier Jour de Bonheur* has been produced with great success.

REMINISCENCES OF MY LIFE.

A MUSICAL JOURNEY AND TWO NEW OPERAS.*

(Continued from page 671.)

3.

At the appointed hour, on Thursday morning, I was seated in the pit of the Munich Theatre, waiting to see what I should see. In addition to myself, there were only a select few, comprising Sophie Förster, the singer; Madlle. Mitterwurzer, the actress; and Herr Vierling, the composer, of Berlin, who was returning from Italy, and had to perform here his first penance for the sins he had committed in that country. The impression produced upon me at rehearsal by the opera, with which I was already acquainted in the pianoforte arrangement, was not a favourable impression, though the music was placed in the right light by the instrumental illumination thrown on it. Certain bits carry one away—I will not deny, for instance, that the conclusion of the first act must produce an overpowering effect upon anyone who has carefully listened to the foregoing scenes. But—as we so frequently find to be the case in Wagner's operas—it is the blade of grass in the desert; the little spot of scanty green, which strikes the weary traveller as a beautiful and luxurious meadow; the climax of an ascent from the most monotonous unintelligibility to a tolerably clear thought, the latter being as welcome to us as the brilliant rays of the sun after a night as black as a raven. Or is the "bride's song" in the third act of *Lohengrin*, a song that always agreeably affects the hearer, more beautiful than a hundred beautiful motives which, in a hundred other operas, are received as the legitimate tribute that every composer owes his public, if he would not have the latter accuse him of possessing a most sterile imagination. The fact is, after two full hours of musical torment, we eagerly gulp down the little drop of water, and our parched palate fancies it is quaffing a rich draught of nectar. But more wearying than the first act of *Tristan* did the second act appear to me; it wants the climax which enables you to forget for a moment the sufferings you have gone through; weight is attached to weight, and the scale of your patience sinks deeper and deeper; I at length found myself in the apathetic condition, which Eugene Sue describes as the sea-fever, of those who have been shipwrecked; I could have bitten my neighbour, Vierling, simply to escape from the *status quo*. The present, however, is not the place to discuss in detail Wagner's operatic compositions; I shall conclude by doing this in some separate chapters, and confine myself now to speaking of the rehearsal. It went, as we are accustomed to express it, very smoothly; on one occasion only did Wagner—from the first tier of boxes—interrupt it, to remark that a figure for the violins was not played in a sufficiently marked manner, or that it was played in too marked a manner (I really do not recollect exactly which). The conversation that ensued thereupon with the orchestra lasted much longer than was necessary, because, as every one knows, the composer is very fond of hearing himself speak—but unfortunately he does so in the wearisome style distinguishing those on whom their fellow countrymen of Saxony bestow in consequence the epitheton ornans of "Schwabbelhäuschen."

Leaving out of consideration the monstrous character of the composition itself, the performance possessed the highest interest for me; but I think that I must assign the prize of merit to the conductor, Hans von Bulow. This eminent artist guided the band and singers with truly marvellous certainty through the tortuous ways of the Wagnerian score, which, it is true, lay before him upon his desk, but which he had so well in his head (instead of having his head in the score, like certain people), that he scarcely glanced at it, frequently not turning the leaves over till long after the right moment; nay, on one occasion, when it was requisite to try back, telling the various instruments when they were to come in by the number of bars which he counted without consulting the manuscript. There is a work (and what a work), to absorb in *succum et sanguinem*; there's a musical memory! But the Munich band, trained for years by Lachner, of course played under their new conductor with such mastery, with such purity of intonation, and with such delicacy of light and shade, that I envied the man whose fortune it was to lead this artistic host into action. Of Von Bulow's bodily deportment when he is conducting, I have frequently heard people speak unfavourably, and, even lately, I saw in Munich some *cartes de visite*, representing him in various ridiculous attitudes, with his conducting stick in his hand. How far the charges of this kind are justifiable, I cannot say, as I never saw him conduct a public performance, but only a rehearsal; in a rehearsal, however, any *mauvaise* is allowable which, in the conductor's opinion, can contribute to carry out the intentions expressed by the composer—though, it is true, only for the purpose of not attracting the attention of the public in the evening. To the public he ought to appear simply as a metronome incarnate, in the noble form and

* From the *Neue Berliner Musikzeitung*.

elegant get-up, for which Spontini should be taken as a model by every conductor. If Bulow deviates from this principle, and makes no difference in his gesticulations in the morning and in the evening, between rehearsal and performance, he will certainly not have to complain of want of ridicule; but this in no way detracts from his ability as the leader of a musical host.—And now where shall I find words to express my astonishment at the solo-singers? But I must first mention the following fact: Late in the summer of the same year, I met on the Brühl'sche Terrasse, Dresden, a well-known North German tenor, who owes his reputation partly to his impersonification of Wagnerian characters. He had just returned from Munich, and I asked him, therefore, whether he was going to study Tristan. He replied quite indignantly: "Do you fancy I am going to learn a part fitted only for a tenor violin!" Well roared, my lion; you hit the nail on the head! Yes,—a part for a tenor violin. To commit such a part to memory, leaving out of consideration its length and difficulty, is a task requiring, besides a stupendous memory, an iron will, and great powers of endurance. But furthermore, to attempt producing a dramatic effect with the materials provided, and sometimes to succeed,—for this the artist requires, besides artistic ability, an unconditional devotion to the work, and a naïve reliance on the composer's infallibility. All these rare qualities I found united in Herr Schnorr and his wife. Not that Brangäne Deinet, Friend Kurwenal Mitterwurzer, and King Marke Bausewein, were less excellent in what they did; but their characters are not so extensive in their range as those of Tristan and of Isolde; and Kurwenal even sometimes approximates to the track which, after being first opened up in *Don Juan* and *Fidelio*, was subsequently worked out by Weber, Spohr, and Marschner, so that while Mitterwurzer's execution of his task struck me as the most successful, it was, for the above reason, after all, the easiest. Mdle. Deinet, whose beautiful, fresh voice, contrasted favourably with Isolde's unsympathetic and fatigued organ, must be endowed with a thoroughly musical nature, for this fact alone could enable her to carry out with such certainty her very difficult tenor part (*viola seconda*); King Marke, also, gave evidence of a famous memory, for he reproved the disloyal Tristan in a lecture taking up quite eight pages—just 200 bars, slow measure—of a closely printed pianoforte arrangement. But what is all this, compared to the gigantic things done by the two principal personages! It is still incomprehensible to me how anyone can manage to identify himself to such an extent with such music, and learn it by heart. For no one must believe that Wagner is the same in *Tristan* that he showed himself to be in *Tannhäuser*. No. We here perceive a complete rupture with the Past; the only thing that has remained the same is the material of which both works are composed, namely, "tone"; but the "tone language" has become quite a new one; a language never heard before. One might almost doubt whether it needs a favoured organization of the brain and of the acoustic nerves to understand such creations—or whether, after all, certain persons do not display a want of true musical feeling by considering and maintaining to be beautiful that which is simply distasteful to ordinary mortals. This reminds me of the following story related by Herr Keller, my official predecessor at Riga, who was subsequently engaged as conductor at St. Petersburg. Keller used to have the greatest difficulty in teaching the basso Börner (known under the name of Kluck-Börner, from excelling in *Das Fest der Handwerker*) his different parts. Börner had a fine voice; had travelled a good deal; and imitated various styles of singing—but he was unmusically educated, or musically uneducated, knowing neither measure nor key, and never hitting upon the right note. Keller used to be always reproaching him with this wretched state of things. Robert was put up; Börner had to study Bertram, and Keller's patience was perfectly exhausted by the worry to which he was subjected day after day. When the duet of the third act was tried at rehearsal for the first time, the conductor sang his Bertram the broken diminished chord of the seventh in triplets:—



and then resignedly prepared to cut out the whole passage. Börner, however, began, and, to the surprise of all the artists present, sang it through quite correctly. "There" said he to Keller. "Yet you are always asserting I am not musical."—"Ah! my dear fellow," replied Keller, "if you were, you would not have done that, I can tell you."—But I will not be unjust, even in joke, for Schnorr had a musical nature, and had received a comprehensive vocal education. . . . What a pity that even powers like his must succumb beneath the mental strain put upon them by Tristan; he died of raging nervous fever a few weeks after the last performance of this opera. So for the present I am content to acknowledge that I lack the sixth sense necessary to enable me to comprehend that which is incomprehensible for me, and—like the Black Knight—I will bide my time.

When the rehearsal was over, I witnessed a scene that I should

otherwise not have believed possible. Wagner went on the stage, and, advancing to the prompter's box, spoke as follows, with a voice almost trembling with emotion, to the band below: "Gentlemen . . . I do not know how to thank you . . . but thus much I can assure you . . . the whole rehearsal has once more convinced me . . . it is really hardly credible . . . and in fact nothing was wanting . . . there! in one word, dear boys, you have played divinely." Now, anyone would think that, when an honoured and popular composer addressed himself in this fashion to his disciples, the latter would burst into ecstasies, for every man who has had the chance of being at the head of a body of artists—no matter whether it was a band, a musical society, a Singing Academy, or a "*Liedertafel*"—knows how easy it is to awake an *esprit du corps*, and, by one or two kind words, to change even the coolest feeling into the warmest sentiment; and how much more, then, should this be the case when a celebrated general, moved by sincere gratitude, addresses his victorious troops after a hard fight! But even while Wagner was stammering away above, I remarked what kind of a temperature reigned below. The gentlemen of the orchestra scarcely listened to what was said, appearing rather to be annoyed that the rehearsal, which had already lasted four hours, should be protracted even a few extra seconds; those who had put on their hats certainly did not take them off again; the violinists packed their violins away in their cases; the clarinetists unscrewed their clarinets; the flautists ran the cleaners up and down inside their flutes; the trombonists got rid of the fluid collected inside their trombones; two gentlemen, with their backs to the stage, had some important piece of news to communicate, and were whispering it into each other's ears; all this being done openly, *sans gêne*, as though there was nothing going forward above. The result of this solo scene struck me, therefore, at once as dubious, but that it would turn out so complete a *fiasco* I certainly did not believe. I thought that the members of the band would at least respect decorum, and let off a small murmur of approbation. Not a bit of it. Wagner fared as though he had been preaching to stones; no thanks, no greeting, nothing! I thus came to the conviction that the virtuosity with which the orchestra had executed their difficult task was to be valued twice as highly as under ordinary circumstances, because the zeal for the success of the work proceeded not from any partiality for the latter, but simply from a feeling of duty. It is possible that opinion has now changed in the circles of Munich; but, at that period, the orchestral thermometer stood at freezing point, and the position of the orchestra by no means suffered in my estimation from the fact.

On being once more enabled, after a sustained effort of four hours, to breathe the fresh air, I met, outside the theatre, a Berlin musician, a student in the instrumental class, who had been engaged for the tenor-trombone part, because, strange to say, the management had not been able to find any one in Munich fitted for the task. He confessed to me that even on that day, and at the eighth rehearsal, he did not know whether he was playing correctly or incorrectly. I consoled him by saying that, in such music, a degree higher or lower made no difference, and that every interval which struck him as dissonant and subsequently unresolved, was a "*Halbton*" as it is called; that scholars were not yet decided whether its use was justifiable, but that the practice of our recent composers had already conferred on it the right of citizenship.

In the evening I treated myself to the theatre in the suburbs, to see a parody of *Tristan und Isolde*, entitled *Tristanderl und Süßholde*; a piece of utter absurdity, and, also, wounding my patriotic feelings, as all the points not relating to Wagner consisted of insults to Prussia. But the music contained some splendid bits, and when a grateful country erects ere long to its Richard the statue it owes him—something in the style of Wredow's group nearest the museum on the Palace Bridge, Berlin—the figure of Victory (under the semblance of H. Rauchenecker, the composer of the parody), who bears the dying warrior heavenwards, must not be wanting; instead of the sprig of laurel, however, a *battuta* must be put in his hand. But only for the sake of intelligibility!

SULLIVAN'S PRODIGAL SON.

To the Editor of the "Musical World."

Sir,—It would seem that the above subject has been musically treated long anterior to either Mr. Sullivan or Dr. S. Arnold. The Abbé Pierre Bourdelot, in his *Histoire de la Musique et de ses Effets* (1715), in describing very circumstantially the origin of the Oratorio under the auspices of S. Philip de Neri in Florence about 1540, mentions as one of the subjects then treated, the Prodigal Son received by his Father. Fétis gives 1776 (three years later than Mr. Chorley) as the date of Dr. Arnold's Oratorio of *The Prodigal Son*.

Alderley Edge, Manchester, Sept. 21, 1869.

JOHN TOWERS.

THE HOF THEATRE AT DRESDEN.

Beautiful Dresden, famous for combining the twin charms of nature and art, has been deprived of one of its principal attractions. The Theatre is burnt down. An architectural masterpiece, and tenanted by one of the best *troupes* in the country, it was equally celebrated for symmetry of construction as for accomplished performances in every department of the dramatic art. Many a traveller, I dare say, on reading these lines will remember the pleasant evenings he has spent in this finished home of the Thespian goddess, where all the muses in rare concord united to provide a feast for eye and soul. In a single hour all this beauty was annihilated. About noon on the 21st. ult. the roof of the building was suddenly enveloped in smoke. A few moments later a lurid glow lighted up the windows of the upper story. Another few seconds and red flashes were seen flickering inside, until, with terrible simultaneousness, the glass panes were burst open, and the flames leapt forth to the sky from every aperture. Within 15 minutes the stately pile, quiet, majestic, bearing the same solid front for so many years, was conquered by a whirl of merciless flames.

But out ran a bevy of ballet-dancers, with a number of little girls in white, youthful *élèves* of the theatre, surprised in the middle of a rehearsal. Out jumped from windows, or slid down ropes, artisans, scene shifters, and other *employés* fearfully disturbed in their preparations for the evening's entertainment. Before all could escape, the friezes and statues round the roof began to fall from their pedestals. The deadly work proceeded with overwhelming and it seems unparalleled rapidity. By the time the first engine arrived on the spot the building was doomed. One after the other the different wings assumed a fiery prominence. Now it was the northern side whose sheets of liquid flame rose high above the volcanic crater formed by the rest; then the raging element shifted to the west; then the centre sent up a million sparks out of a mantling volume of dense, dull smoke. At last, if it be appropriate to speak of first and last in an occurrence which occupied little more than an hour, and to the stunned spectators appeared much less, the whole structure stood in ruddy glare, a seething cauldron of fire. As though the theatre meant to be true to the last to the purpose it had served during a short but honourable existence, there was a perfect theatrical climax in the process of destruction.

A vast crowd had assembled in the neighbouring square, on the bridge, and the Brühl'sche Terrasse, to witness the awful spectacle. In its palmiest nights the house had never delighted so vast an audience inside as now gazed with mingled feelings from every possible point of view on the beautiful but terrible closing performance. The brigade, which had turned out in force, stood by, looking on impotently. There was nothing to be done but to protect the adjacent buildings. For hours during and after the conflagration the Hotel de Belle Vue—about as well known a resort of travelling humanity as Rigi Kilm, or the Grimsel Hospice,—the Catholic Church, the small popular restaurants on the banks of the river, and, above all, the Picture Gallery, with its invaluable and unreplaceable contents, were drenched with water. Fortunately the wind, which had been blowing for a fortnight, subsided on the fatal day. But for this lucky circumstance, Raphael's Sistine Madonna, Holbein's Virgin, and Vandyke's Charles I., might now exist only in copie. At one time the prospect of preserving the Gallery appeared so precarious as to cause the best pictures to be removed from the front to the back wing. It is, or, at any rate, ought to be, unlikely that the theatre, with its multitude of inflammable stuff, will be rebuilt in its old place. By 3 o'clock the house was converted into a smouldering ruin. An empty shell, the four walls stood, enclosing waste and rubbish. From a projecting corner of the roof Rietschel's famous group, "Orestes pursued by the Furies," looked down on the desolation below, rendering it more palpable by its own intactness. Hähnel's frieze representing the Bacchantes, from an admired piece of art, was reduced to a heap of broken stones, and Weber's statue in the promenade at the back, melancholy as ever, had now a *vis-à-vis* suited to its mournful expression. With the theatre were destroyed a costly collection of mediæval arms and furniture, the gift of Royal munificence for dramatic purposes. The greater part of the side scenes and costumes, as well as the library, the scores and most of the musical instruments, not being kept in the house, remain for future use. Notwithstanding that these valuable things have been saved, the loss is estimated at a million thalers (£150,000), of which sum little more than a tenth is insured.

The accounts concerning the origin of the fire, conflicting as usual on a sudden and rapid catastrophe, seemed to leave no doubt that it might have been easily obviated, or, at any rate, more effectively contended against when once kindled. In a loft immediately above the centre chandelier some workmen were engaged in preparing canvass for transportable gas-pipes. For this purpose they used a solution containing benzoin, and, notwithstanding the inflammable nature of this stuff, were permitted to light pastilles to drive away the unpleasant smell. Now, this was a threefold blunder. It is unwise to apply ben-

zoin for such a purpose at all; it is equally so to put it on within the walls of a theatre; and it is an additional aggravation to permit the fire to be brought near such a combustible substance, especially in a place so liable to blaze up on the shortest notice. As to the prudence of selecting for the commission of these careless tricks the driest room in the house, exposed to the sun all day, and to the ascending heat of the chandelier a good portion of the night, we will say nothing. But it deserves to be noticed that, though the accident occurred at mid-day, and with plenty of people in the house, no one thought of turning off the gas. It was this oversight which made the case hopeless from the very outset. If it had been intended to experimentize on the velocity with which the igniting spark is capable of being communicated throughout a large structure, no better provision could have been made than to erect such a mass of wood and canvass, overlay it with a network of gas-pipes, and keeping the main pipe open, light it from the top where the draught is strongest. There seems to be a fatality about these theatres at Dresden. Several have been burnt down within the memory of man, and the present house, the finest of all, has stood only 20 years. It was the work of Semper, the most renowned German architect of the day. Until a new theatre can be built, a task of years, the performances will be given elsewhere, probably in the Riding School or the *Gewand Haus*. Dresden, deriving such advantage from strangers and travellers, less than any other town can afford to miss this prolific source of entertainment. There are 20,000 resident foreigners in the place, not to speak of the shoals of itinerants visiting the Saxon capital during six months of the year. Large enough to offer all the conveniences of a refined civilization, situate in a picturesque neighbourhood, and not too expensive for residents, it has long maintained an eminent place among those German towns where the various enjoyments of life can, perhaps, be procured more easily than anywhere else. Compared to Berlin, which is as expensive as London, as tightly ground down to work as New York, and begins to be again as intellectually active as it was in the more stirring periods of its history—compared to this money-making, money-spending, and excited capital of Germany, Dresden is an elysium of ease, peace, and cultivated repose. In Dresden, the theatre was an institution, and the performance a rite; in Berlin the one is a speculation and the other a pastime.

SE NON È VERO, &c.

A writer in *Le Gaulois* says that three gentlemen, dining at an hotel not far from Paris, were attracted by the singing of a young and pretty girl, to whom one of them, on her going round for gratuities, offered a kiss. Another of the party interfered and protected the child. Three days after the protector received a letter, of which the following is a translation:—

"MONSIEUR,—I beg you to pardon the liberty I take in writing to you. I am the young girl whom you heard sing at X. I wish to enter a Conservatoire, but I have nobody to protect me, for I have known only misfortune.

"The woman I call my mother is nothing to me; I am an orphan; she makes me sing when my heart is full of grief, and I have to smile when I choke with sobs. It is necessary to humble myself before creatures who address me vilely, and I have nobody to whom to confide my griefs. I am alone in the world. I have not the blessing of a mother able to tell me, 'This is good,' or 'That is bad.' And to crown misfortune, the woman uses me to make herself a position. Pardon my frankness; alas! all that I tell you is too true.

"Believe me that it costs me something to speak to you thus; but I run the hazard of it, encouraged by the lady of the hotel, who says that you are good and all-powerful, and that you will help me to enter a Conservatoire.

"Without your aid I can do nothing; I possess only the honour of a young girl, much compromised by the life they have compelled me to lead, but I believe in God, and He will not abandon me. Say something to me, Monsieur. Say that you, whom I have seen but once, you will be my good genius. You will not confer favour on an ungrateful heart. Your very humble little singer, "C."

"Voyons, Monsieur Auber," says the *Gaulois*, "can you do nothing for this poor child? We have her address, but do not print it to invite the recriminations of her false mother. Will you refuse yourself the pleasure of giving, to this other Mignon—her *premier jour de bonheur*?"

Le Ménestrel adds:—"We append to the pressing invitation of 'Domino' (the *Gaulois* writer) that it is thanks to her violin, and her village songs that little Christine Nilsson excited the lively sympathy of her protectress, and was sent from Sweden to study in Paris. Who knows? The Conservatoire is, perhaps, called upon to show us a second Nilsson."

COLOGNE.—The Gürzenich Concerts will recommence on the 12th October.

East Words about "Das Rheingold."

Last week's *Athenaeum* gave a new and amusing proof of the nature of the grounds on which such honest persons as bow the knee to Herr Wagner claim homage for their uncouth and shapeless musical idol. The concocter of *Das Rheingold* has, in Mr. Walter Bache, found a champion more earnest than original, more peremptory than powerful or prudent. Let us look into the reason of such championship. First, Mr. Bache tells us, we "must consider a Wagner opera" as "a drama with musical declamation,—a work consisting of music, poetry, scenery, and action." Ere thus bidden "to eat the leek," old-fashioned students like myself, I submit, had already been instructed to consider that the above-cited four elements were indispensable to every opera, whether the same was classical in the observance of unities, or romantic in its appeals to the fancy. Possibly Mr. Bache intended to say that no single element should predominate; that the scene-painter and the machinist should hold an equal place with that of the dramatist who devises the tale in poetry, of the musician who clothes it with all the garnitures of a beautiful art, subject to certain and definite laws, and that of the actors who exhibit the thoughts completed rather than nakedly expressed by the skill and science of the musician. All separation for the purpose of analysis of any of the elements aforesaid is thereby protested against by Mr. Bache. A green canvas tree is thereby asserted to be as "worthy" (to quote old grammar) as a musical phrase,—a thump on the drum as superb as any flash of genius on the part of a Pasta, a Lablache, a Mailbran. Let such a fallacy pass, that we may come to a truism of its kind equally astounding. Mr. W. Bache insists that no clear understanding of the Wagnerian shows can be arrived at without the admirer, or recusant, as may be, having been present at an efficient performance of them, or the study of some entire scene at a pianoforte recital, accompanied by the voice. "By this means," continues our enthusiast, "in the case of Wagner, the mind must distinctly realize and retain a train of musical and poetical thought which has never before been expressed, which may occupy half-an-hour in its delivery, and which becomes more clear and definite after being actually heard than can possibly be the case after being merely imagined." It is certainly as well to know something about that which the hearer pretends to judge; but such an amazing concession does not help us to the solution of Mr. Bache's difficulty. Audrey's question, "Is it a true thing?" remains unanswered. Are we considering a stately edifice,

"—a pleasure dome of rare device,"

and composed of precious material, pointing upwards to the skies? or some chaotic monster not meriting the name of a building, in which every accepted law and proportion are reversed or set aside, and in which, failing gold and marble and precious stones, we are bidden to accept by way of novelty, such rubbish as great artificers of genius have cast aside by reason of its meanness and want of worth? No reiteration of flat and pompous truisms, I am convinced, will give grace, variety, or originality to the inane and unmeaning phrases allotted to the singers in *Das Rheingold*,—dramatic interest or poetry to its awkward and scarcely intelligible legend, told in flat or outrageous language, nor practicability to scenic combinations ridiculous because impossible. Every condition that Mr. Walter Bache demands (including that of preliminary study of the pianoforte score) was complied with by many who attended the careful and excellent, and all but complete, presentation of *Das Rheingold* at its rehearsal. Of course, the impression of miserable weariness made on these by bad choice of the drama, by monotony and want of significance in ideas, worse arrangement of it for music, and an absurdity of scenery, is ascribed by Mr. Bache to "pre-conceived prejudice," to "critical obstinancy and incompetence," and to a feeling embittered by Herr Wagner's polemical habit of exalting himself by abusing his betters (not forgetting his cant about Judaism). But Mr. Bache's assertions, unsupported by proof, will no more attract a public to the booth of a transcendental charlatan, than my impressions will destroy that which deserves to thrive and live, even as the music of the great masters has thriven and still lives on the opera stages of Germany Italy, France, and England. There may be fits of disease and bad taste; but that which is true and real is great, and, as the adage says, "will prevail."

Sept. 16, 1869.

HENRY F. CHORLEY.

BRESLAU.—The new comic opera, *Zieten'sche Husaren*, by Herr Bernhard Scholz, will shortly be produced here.—Herr Ferdinand Hiller has announced a concert.—The series of concerts given by the Orchestral Union will commence on the 12th October, under the direction of Herr Daimrosch.

CASSEL.—A new opera, entitled *Die Rosstrappe*, is to be performed here by the pupils, male and female, of the Conservatory. The composer is Herr Schulze, himself a pupil at the institution. The book is founded upon the well-known legend of the "Rosstrapp," and the heroine is the Princess Brunhilde.

Charles Maurice.

Charles Maurice, editor of the old *Courrier des Théâtres*, and for many years one of the most notorious figures in the theatrical world of Paris, has lately died at the advanced age of eighty-seven. Now he is gone, it is attempted to be proved that he was one of the most honest and independent of critics. Such a defence is fatal to his reputation. Looked upon as the incarnation of a system of cheap venality, Maurice lived, like Suehe, on the badness of his character. No one accused him of taking large bribes. A subscription to his paper, first brought out in 1818, and continued till 1849, was considered a sufficient premium to ensure an artist against assault. No one was a greater proficient in establishing a "raw," and working upon it when established. He did not demolish a victim with a single article, but would give a line a day as perpetual cause of irritation. Protection against such treatment was worthy an outlay of some 30 or 40 francs for the half-year. There was small delicacy in his attacks. Mdlle. Georges, who had incurred his wrath, furnished, by the stoutness which she acquired in her latter years, theme for brutal, if not very amusing, pleasantries. Thus the fact that the elephant Cluny performed at the Porte Saint Martin on the evening when Mdlle. Georges made her *début* at the Odéon, was recorded as a strange coincidence. When the same lady was at the Porte Saint Martin, masons, it was said, had been hired to shore up the house. Nor was absence from the stage enough to place the butt beyond the reach of the marksmen.

An anecdote respecting Louis Philippe was once invented for the sole purpose of annoying Mdlle. Georges. According to the *Courrier*, while the King was reviewing his troops on the Champ de Mars, beneath a sun that nearly consumed reviewer and reviewed, a sudden relief was afforded by a shadow unexpectedly cast over the whole assembly. This was the shadow of Mdlle. Georges, passing in her carriage. Mdlle. Dorval was more delicately assailed. A eulogistic article appeared one day, lauding her to the skies, and bestowing upon her every possible attribute of excellence, with the reservation that her memory was defective. The lady, who was on intimate terms with Maurice, called to know why she was charged with so unusual a defect. "You have forgotten to renew your subscription," was the reply. Madame Dorval retorted that he need only have sent his receipt for five subscriptions as usual. "Five!" exclaimed the editor; "you always subscribe for ten. It is clear that your memory is failing."

A story about Talma puts Charles Maurice in more favourable light. The great tragedian did not subscribe to the *Courrier*, but his reputation was so colossal that he could not be attacked without circumspection. An article accordingly made its appearance, in which to half a dozen lines of praise was added the following supplement:—

"Ce que j'admire en lui (Talma), ce sont les trois gestes qu'il a et qui sont vraiment remarquables. L'un de ces gestes consiste à porter sa main à son cœur,—c'est le No. 1; le second à étendre le bras en avant,—c'est le No. 2; le troisième à jeter les deux bras devant lui et à les ramener contre sa poitrine,—c'est le No. 3."

The application of the general principle thus laid down was made in a subsequent number:—

"Hier nous avons assisté à la représentation d'*Horace*. Talma jouait *Horace*. Il a été admirable dans le geste No. 2. Au moment des imprécations il s'est montré merveilleux en développant le geste No. 3. Quant au geste No. 1, nous l'avons applaudi plusieurs fois dans la soirée. Il en a même été si content lui-même qu'il l'a répété à dessein plusieurs fois."

After this sort of thing had been repeated some half-a-dozen times, Talma called upon Maurice, and told him that he need not concern himself any more about him, as he intended to quit the stage. So deeply was Maurice moved—so goes the tale—that he threw himself on his knees before the tragedian, and begged his pardon. From that time they were close friends.

The personal attacks of Maurice frequently led to demands for satisfaction, and as he never refused a challenge, his duels were numerous. One day he was sitting between his wife and a friend, to whom he was reading the details of some affair of honour, but suddenly stopped short, forgetting whether he had broken the leg or the collar-bone of his antagonist. Madame Maurice, a remarkably sedate lady, rising from her chair, fetched a large book and turned over the pages in alphabetical order, till she reached the object of her search,—"*Vous lui avez cassé le bras*," was her quiet report.

By dint of his levy of black mail, or his honest criticism, whichever it was, Charles Maurice, after thirty years' work at the *Courrier des Théâtres*, which, by the way, frequently changed its title, was enabled to retire with an income of 5,000 francs. A complete collection of the numbers of the journal would be one of the most valuable records of the Parisian stage, but is hardly to be obtained. It is said, indeed, that even the set in possession of the French Dramatic Authors' Society is far from perfect, and that the only one thoroughly complete was owned by Maurice himself, and is to be found among his effects.

Schaber Silber.

Histoire de Palmerin d'Olive filz du Roy FLORENDOS de
 MAEDONNE et de LA BELLE GRIANE, fille de Remiclus, Empereur de Constan-
 tinople, by **Jean Maugin**, dit le **Petit Angevin**. A perfect copy of this
 extremely rare Romance to be sold for FORTY-FIVE GUINEAS.

Enquire of DUNCAN DAVISON & Co., 214, Regent Street, W.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

AJAX TELEMON.—Knave and simpleton are often combined in one. Colley Cibber served the King both as poet and fool.

AMATEUR.—Your musical friend has misled you. We have no "bias," and, therefore, it cannot be "well known;" therefore, also, your protest against "petty spirit" is a waste of energy. Nowhere have the merits of the artist referred to had more vigorous assertion than in our columns. This fact you might easily have ascertained, and so avoided the making of charges upon hearsay.

* * In the next number of the "Musical World" will be commenced a Series of Articles, with music-type illustrations, on Mr. Arthur S. Sullivan's "Prodigal Son."

NOTICE.

It is urgently requested that Advertisements may be sent not later than Thursday, otherwise they will be too late for insertion in the current number.

TO ADVERTISERS.—The Office of the MUSICAL WORLD is at Messrs. DUNCAN DAVISON & Co.'s, 214, Regent Street, corner of Little Argyle Street (First Floor). Advertisements received as late as Three o'clock P.M. on Thursdays, but not later. Payment on delivery.

The Musical World.

LONDON, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2, 1869.

HERR RICHTER ON HIS DEFENCE.

IN another column we give a translation of a letter addressed by Herr Hans Richter, the Munich rebel conductor, to the *Süd-deutsche Presse*. It contains his vindication, and a very spirited one it is. Reading the letter, we, of course, bear in mind that the statements made are entirely *ex parte*, and that full materials for a judgment upon the case are not in hand till Herr von Perfall has had a say on the other side. Nevertheless, it must be granted that Herr Richter tells a plausible story, and hits his adversaries hard.

Herr Richter begins with a confession of faith in his master,—Wagner. We are getting used to these confessions, now that trouble has come upon the object of them. In Germany, and in England, disciples come forward vaunting their belief, just as the Apostle and Preacher is being "beaten with many stripes." There must be something in the latter more than common, or we should hear nothing of these aspirants for martyrdom in his cause. "Herr Richard Wagner is my highly-honoured master," says Herr Richter, "... and I frankly confess my unbounded admiration for him." These be brave words, and though we do not sympathize with, we can appreciate them. But Herr Richter feels gratitude as well as admiration, and, expressing it, he gives Herr von Perfall a smart side blow. Both, we are told, owed their places to Wagner;—the one always endeavoured to show himself grateful; as regards the other, "it is, to say the least, doubtful whether Herr von Perfall greatly favoured the representation of Wagner's works, or opposed the intrigues of a well-known clique against him."

Herr Richter repeats the now well-known story of slack preparations, and general inefficiency in the scenic department. But he denies ever asserting that he "would not conduct *Rheingold*, even though commanded to do so by the King." What he confesses to have said, is, that he should serve the King ill by bring-

ing out a work from which so much was expected under conditions so unfavourable. Rather than do this, and, at the same time, endanger the opera entrusted to him by its composer, he preferred deliberate rebellion against the rules of the theatre, thus, sacrificing position, rather than artistic convictions. As regards Herr Richter's behaviour, we do not ask whether the preparations were actually as incomplete as he believed. The matter turns upon the honesty of his belief. Granting that honesty, we think Herr Richter behaved like an artist, and a man of spirit. Rebellion against constituted authority—especially against a King's Intendant—is a great crime, but there are occasions which justify it, and this seems to have been one of them.

Herr Richter's hint at a conspiracy against *Rheingold* we shall not attempt to follow up. Upon its truth, however, hangs the most important subsequent event—Herr Wagner's setting out from Munich, disgusted and hopeless, after going there with the intention of making peace, and of bearing meekly every indignity. If we may believe Herr Richter, even the Master himself was powerless against a cabal so formidable as that which had Herr von Perfall for an instrument. All this is very likely to be true, and a nice revelation it makes of petty, miserable intrigue. If true, let us say, once for all, that Wagner and the Wagnerian works are not to be put down so. Those who dislike both can only fight to conquer by fighting fairly.

It will be observed that Herr Richter gives a flat denial to the story of the Wagner telegram, and to that other story which related how the Prophet sought the King and was repulsed. Finally, he says, not without a certain dignity, "Such is a simple statement of the real facts. I answer for the truth of what I have affirmed." The effect of Herr Richter's "simple statement" must be great, unless the other side can disprove it. Till that disproof comes, we shall look upon the whole matter as one about which no musician can feel anything save shame. Such a miserable "storm in a slop-basin" is a disgrace to the art.

PROVINCIAL.

MALVERN.—Our correspondent at this place, writes as follows:—

"Madame Arabella Goddard, gave her long wished-for recital, at Mr. Haynes's Music-hall on Monday night. The room was well filled by a very fashionable audience. The orchestra was neatly arranged, and much taste was displayed in its decoration. To descend at length on the abilities of Madame Goddard is superfluous. Suffice it to say, whatever this illustrious orator on the piano undertakes, is done in the most finished style. Even this is saying what everybody knows. One of the gems of the evening, was the Grand Sonata Pastoral of Beethoven. Never was this lovely sonata interpreted with more feeling and vigour of execution. To hear the artist develop all its beauties was a treat of the highest order. Anything more magnificent could not be imagined; and we fear we must look forward some long period to its like. Another treat was the new Fantasia by Benedict, composed for Madame Goddard. We are sure she is never more happy than when playing Mr. Benedict's music; but how she conquered the difficulties in the commencement of the fantasia was a matter of wonder to all—difficulties, however, faded away before Madame Goddard's skill. The charming melody from the overture was brought in and pleased the audience much. Madame Goddard was relieved in her playing by the excellent singing of Miss Edmonds, whose fine and sweet quality of voice, perfect enunciation, and good taste gratified everybody. Miss Edmonds, who added much to the night's entertainment, sings with sweetness and great simplicity of style, not covering her songs with tawdry embellishments, but keeping to the author's text. Her rendering of 'Rock me to sleep,' also 'When Daisies Pied,' was admirable. The concert was brought to a close at ten o'clock, not keeping the audience too long, nor tiring them in the least. Our energetic townsman, Mr. Haynes, merits the greatest praise for his spirited undertaking. He has been the means of bringing one of the highest artists to Malvern. We hope Mr. Haynes will occasionally give us treats equally great."

ROME.—Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* has been produced at the Teatro Argentina, but under the title of *Roberto di Picaudia*, as the original title was too diabolical for the censors of his Holiness.

OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

THE WORCESTER FESTIVAL.

The *Daily Telegraph* having made a statement, with reference to the Worcester Festival, which gave umbrage to the *Worcester Journal*, is thus taken to task by "Borrow"—

"Some sceptical people have been known to ask—What reliance can be placed upon tradition, when plain and palpable facts of a few days—or may be but hours—old are unintentionally misrepresented? 'Tis even so. Now, we have an illustration of the proneness to error in the matter of our recent Musical Festival. The *Daily Telegraph* of Tuesday, in a semi-leader, records our Festival as a decided failure—so decided indeed, that it may be regarded as about the last of a long decaying series of efforts in a good cause. This, we are told, is attributable to the fact that 'London presents one round of musical festivals—the Opera, Crystal Palace, &c. &c.—and, consequently,' continues our contemporary, 'such festivals as those of Norwich and Worcester have lost much of their attraction.' The proof of this alleged decay is in an error of the writer's own, who evidently supposes that the whole produce of the Festival amounted to the sum of £1,000 'taken at the doors.' He evidently knows nothing of the additional trifle of £5,000 received for tickets. So far from manifesting such signs of weakness as he implies, the late Festival was the most profitable of any one of its predecessors for very many years. For example, in 1860 the number which attended the Cathedral was 6,374, and the receipts £3,700. In 1863, the receipts were £4,200; in 1866, £4,600; and in 1869 the rate of increase continued both in the attendance, which amounted to 9,147 persons, and the receipts to £5,000. Putting the two sources of income together, the gross receipts on the recent occasion amount to £6,000. Where, we may ask, is the future historian of England to seek for materials but in the columns of that press which boasts—as indeed well it may as a rule—of its photographic accuracy? The *Telegraph* has merely made a mistake—that's all. Since the foregoing has been in type, Dr. Williams, the zealous and efficient secretary to the Festival, has forwarded to us a copy of a letter which he addressed to the *Daily Telegraph*, but which our liberal—very liberal—contemporary has not thought worthy of insertion in his columns:—

"To the Editor of the *Daily Telegraph*."

"Sir,—Will you allow me to correct an erroneous statement, contained in your paper to-day, with reference to the 'comparative pecuniary failures' of the Worcester Festival, and 'the decline the cause of which is not far to seek.' The receipts from the sale of tickets and books were in 1860, £3,700; in 1863, £4,200; in 1866, £4,600; in 1869, £5,000. I think you will agree with me that these figures conclusively prove that the taste for good music performed in the provinces is steadily progressing, and that there is no indication whatever of the 'curtain dropping on the venerable existence' of our increasingly popular institution. The sums collected at the doors are quite independent of the amounts already quoted, and are clearly not regulated by the numbers in the Cathedral which, this year, were 600 in excess of any previous occasion. The contributions at the present date are more than £1,000.—Yours truly,

"Worcester, Sept. 21, 1869.

PHILIP H. WILLIAMS, M.D., Hon. Sec."

"Borrow" is, by this time, partially placated, for the *Telegraph* of Monday contained Dr. Williams's letter.

GIN AND VICKERS WITH MUSIC.

Apropos of a banquet given to celebrate the opening of another music-hall, at which presided Stanley Vickers, Esq., M.P. and distiller, the *Theatrical and Musical Review* makes some caustic observations. Our contemporary says:—

"A short time ago the illustrious Mr. E. T. Smith nearly succeeded in catching a Member of Parliament to preside at one of his refined revelries. Mr. Sheridan's name was placarded all over Dunmow, and the Dunmowians were all agog with the idea that their vulgar high jinks were to be sanctioned by the mystic initials, M.P. Dunmow and Mr. E. T. Smith were, however, disappointed. At the last moment Mr. Sheridan's good angel came to his rescue, and spared the Napoleon of Life Insurance this further degradation. The feat so narrowly missed by Mr. Smith has just been successfully performed by Mr. E. Villiers, proprietor of a new music-hall in South London, the first stone of which was laid on Thursday last, by Stanley Vickers, Esq., M.P. There is great propriety in this association. Mr. Vickers, besides being a Member of Parliament, is also a member of a well-known firm whose principal business is the production of gin. Now, a music-hall besides being a place for the performance of music is also a place for the consumption of gin. Mr. Villiers having determined to catch an M.P., showed, therefore, great taste in his particular selection. The M.P. himself at a banquet subsequent to the ceremony seemed to have had a faint idea that this bond of union might strike some of his hearers, for he particularly insisted that he had presided not because he served Mr. Villiers with so many gallons of spirit, but because the hero of the day had always paid his gin account; adding, with refined pathos that that was the reason 'Stanley Vickers will do his best to support such a man.' Indeed 'Stanley Vickers's' pomposity, eloquence, and condescension combined, make his short speech one of the most stirring we have ever read, even on an occasion so lofty and so noble as the present one. It is only to be matched by the harangue of the new music-hall proprietor himself, who in a humble and unostentatious manner entertained the company for about half an

hour with remarks on his own honour, probity, and truthfulness. If the system of dinner-giving on all possible occasions were not so thoroughly engrained in English life, we should think this unfortunate exhibition would give it its deathblow. Where is this sort of thing to stop? Next we shall hear of 'mine host' of the public house giving a dinner to celebrate its opening, and getting some gentleman who has sailed into Parliament on London Porter or British Spirits to preside."

"Music-halls are numerous and mischievous enough already; this pseudo-parliamentary patronage will render them rampant. If this amazing kind of folly must take place, at least let it be with closed doors, and let the Vickers of the hour forego the attendance of the reporter."

"THE PURITAN'S DAUGHTER" IN NEW YORK.

Madame Parepa-Rosa opened her season at the Théâtre Française, New York, on the 11th of September, when Balfé's *Puritan's Daughter* was heard for the first time in America. The work being English, and many of the artists English also, the criticism of the *New York Herald* will be read with interest:—

"The Parepa-Rosa English opera season had an auspicious commencement at this favourite establishment on Saturday night, so far as the attendance was concerned. A more fashionable and brilliant audience has rarely greeted an artist in opera. The boxes and dress-circle were ablaze with beauty and *bijouterie*, and we recognized many well-known lyric and dramatic artists present, among them, conspicuously, Mdlle. Carlotta Patti. The initial opera was the *Puritan's Daughter*, one of Balfé's latest works, in which Roundheads and Cavaliers are brought together in an old feudal hall, to the imminent danger of the Cavaliers, who consist only of the merry monarch and his dissolute confidant, Rochester, and a rare specimen of uprightness and honour named Clifford. The traditional barmaid and landlord; a foolish love-stricken rustic; a rather 'mixed' buccaneer, and a fearfully stern old Roundhead, bearing the appropriate title of Wolf, are the other characters in the opera. They all combine to illustrate a very interesting story of conspiracy, love, loyalty, peril, confusion, prayers, drunkenness, and other ingredients which generally go to make up the libretto of an opera. The opening piece, 'Here's to Wine,' was splendidly rendered by a well-balanced and highly effective chorus. It is the most sparkling number in the work. The succeeding dialogue between the bold buccaneer and his mate might be profitably cut out; for the buccaneer does not speak plain and his mate deals too much in 'asides.' Ralph, the rustic (Mr. E. Seguire, a true, conscientious artist), and Jessie, the barmaid (Mrs. Smith, *née* Miss Stockton), next sang a rather unattractive duet, which is (in the score) followed by a delicious baritone song, 'My own sweet child,' sung with telling effect by the prince of baritones, S. C. Campbell. In the next scene (the ruined chapel) the Puritans sing a couple of stirring and inspiring choruses, which relieve the monotony of the recitative. The next scene is pleasantly opened by a quaint, pretty little song, 'Pretty Flower,' which was sung by Madame Parepa-Rosa with inimitable effect. The first act ends with a good, well harmonized chorus, which was arranged by Madame Rosa to relieve the barrenness of the *finale* in the original score! Campbell sang a beautiful song in the second act, which received a well-deserved encore. King Charles and Rochester (Messrs. Hall and Castle) have a great deal of fun and jollity in this act. Mr. Castle will do well to cut out the scene between him and Mrs. Smith (*née* Miss Stockton) which occurs here. Madame Rosa sang a brilliant, taking waltz of the Ardit school with her well-known dash and effect. In this act the new baritone, Mr. Albert Lawrence, made his American *début*. He has a fine, clear, well trained voice of considerable power, but lacking somewhat in sympathetic quality, at least in the same quality that has made Campbell the best of American baritones. Perhaps his voice has not got over the sea voyage, but on Saturday night it sounded a little hard and lacking in resonance. Castle made a decided hit in a drinking song, which in voice and action was simply inimitable. He was superb also in the melodic genre which commences the last act. The orchestra, under the able direction of Carl Rosa, was everything that could be desired. On the whole, this opera possesses a great deal of very fine music, some of Balfé's best, a good deal of dreary recitative and much unnecessary dialogue. With judicious pruning, it is bound to be a favourite. Taking into account the usual delays of a first night, the opera went off very smoothly, and Madame Parepa-Rosa has reason to congratulate herself on the excellent company she has congregated around her for the season. The opera was very well placed on the stage, all the accessories being faultless. The three baritones, Lawrence, Campbell, and Hall, the tenors, Castle and De Solla, and last, though not least, the peerless *prima donna* herself, form a combination of musical talent to which our lyric stage has been long a stranger. In addition to the cuts mentioned above we would also recommend the pruning of the first duet between Ralph and Jessie, and the recitative in the Chapel-scene, the substitution of the oboe and bassoon for the clarinet *obbligato* in the song 'Pretty Flower,' the erasure of the dialogue between King Charles and Rochester in the beginning of the second act, and the entire of Seymour's music in the last act. The opera is principally deficient in concerted pieces, like those which give such a charm to the other works of Balfé, and what has been introduced by Carl Rosa and Madame Parepa-Rosa is very effective. It will be given for the second time to-night, and will probably be reduced to the proper limit—say two hours and a half."



Despite the opinion of "our contemporary," we cannot but think that "Carl Rosa and Madame Parepa-Rosa" had better have let Balfe's work alone. What with the suggested "pruning" and the actual additions, Balfe himself would hardly know it.

THE GUN-COTTON CONCERTS.

Fun is "down upon" the Tonic Sol-fa monstrosity (ycleped a "Jubilee") with exceeding sharpness:—

"Our warmest support has always been given to the Crystal Palace, which does worthy work as 'the Palace of the People's Pleasures.' But we have no words to express our disgust at the repetition on Wednesday last of the so-called Concert in miserable imitation of the Monster clamour at Boston. In America anything that is 'big' is considered 'great,' but we hoped better things of the Crystal Palace. * * * The Tonic Sol-fa Society have thoroughly disgusted all people of taste by a repetition—for profit's sake—of a folly which was pardoned in the first instance on the score of curiosity. We trust the inhabitants of Sydenham and its vicinity will take steps to prevent any recurrence of the nuisance. It is simply abominable that people of delicate nerves, and invalids—and there must be many within reach of the noise—should be disturbed by the repeated firing of guns, because a convocation of idiots cannot distinguish between noise and music."

Let us all hope that the last has been heard of this business, and that, having feebly imitated Yankee noises, we may once more turn to excelling Yankee music.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

The second Nilsson Concert, on Saturday last, was equally a success with the first. Thousands crowded to hear the popular artist. Mdle. Nilsson first sang in the "Inflammatus" (*Stabat Mater*) and thoroughly proved the sonority of her voice by making herself heard above the band and chorus. She was recalled of course. The next effort was in "Quis est homo," with Madame Trebelli-Bettini. How charmingly the accomplished artists did their work it is superfluous to say. Mdle. Nilsson next sang "Ernani involami" and obtained a third recall. After her exquisite rendering of "Home, sweet Home" the audience insisted upon an encore, and were, to their infinite delight, rewarded with "The Last Rose of Summer," which they rapturously applauded. This brought Mdle. Nilsson's share of the work to an end. Among other features of the concert were Madame Trebelli's singing of the air, "Love not the world," from *The Prodigal Son*, Signor Bettini's "Il mio tesoro," Signor Foli's "Pro peccatis," and the overtures to *Le Siège de Corinthe* and *Zanetta*. The Crystal Palace choir also had a share of the programme. Mr. Manns conducted.

HOLBORN THEATRE.

Mr. Barry Sullivan, having thoroughly set his house in order, opened it for another, we trust, prosperous season, on Saturday last. The theatre has been much changed in appearance during the recess. Not only is it more beautiful generally, but the orchestra and stalls present a novel sight, owing to the semi-circular shape of the former, and the consequent bringing of the latter close up to either side of the stage. The alteration may be deemed an improvement, second only to that at the Prince of Wales's, where the band is removed from sight altogether.

The performances began with a sketch by Mr. Harry Lemon, *Wait for an Answer*, which served as a *lever de rideau* to Mr. Thomas Morton's adaptation of Barrière's *Les Parisiens de la Décadence*. In its English form the play is called *Plain English*, the central figure being, as in the original, the gentleman who, with a disagreeable, if wholesome, frankness, speaks his mind in unequivocal terms on all possible occasions. This character, styled by Mr. Morton, "Frank Blunt," was played by Mr. Barry Sullivan with great success. The artist and the part suit each other admirably, and Mr. Sullivan's "plain English" could scarcely have been made more forcible. The other characters were sustained by Mrs. Hermann Vezin, Miss Rignold, Miss Howard, Messrs. J. C. Cooper, W. H. Stephens, &c., and the piece is likely to attract for some time. Whether it will do as much for the enterprising manager as *Money* and the *School for Scandal* time must be left to tell.

WIESBADEN.—MM. Vieuxtemps and Brassin played at the last Concert of the Administration; the former, two of his own compositions; the latter, a Nocturne of his own composition, and the *Faust* Waltz, by the Abbatte Franz Liszt.

MORE ABOUT RHEINGOLD.

Herr Hans Richter, the ex-Musik-Director, has addressed a long letter to the *Süddeutsche Presse*, relating to the non-production of Herr Richard Wagner's opera of *Rheingold*. After taking leave of the orchestra and chorus, whom he thanks for the marks of sympathy they showed him on his leaving, he proceeds as follows:—

"When the retirement of Herr von Bülow had unfortunately passed into the domain of accomplished fact, the task of conducting *Rheingold* was transferred to me. In consequence of my having had repeated conferences with the composer, I was acquainted with his intentions down to the slightest details, and there was no necessity for my promising him that I would do all in my power to advance the interests of his work. Herr Richard Wagner is my highly honoured master; I am more especially indebted to him for whatever musical knowledge I possess of the great masters, ancient and modern, and I frankly confess my unbounded admiration for him, even despite those who, in the press, regard that veneration as an act of artistic abasement, or a crime of lese-majesty. I confess, with equal frankness, that I owe my position to Wagner's recommendation, a recommendation I was the less loth to accept, seeing that I was in aristocratic company, since Richard Wagner's intervention was equally useful to the present Intendant of the Theatre Royal. I have always endeavoured to do credit to this recommendation, and to show myself grateful for it, but it is, to say the least, doubtful whether Herr von Perfall greatly favoured the representation of Wagner's works, or opposed the intrigues of a well-known clique against him. Public opinion will decide which of us two has followed, in this, the better path.

"The musical preparations being completed, the general rehearsals were about to begin. At the first such rehearsal, it was perceived that, with the exception of the very fragmentary preparation of the scenery, nothing had been done since the month of March, that is to say, for an interval of six months. If the technical management recently confided by Herr von Perfall to Herr Seitz, the reason of whose nomination to such functions has never been clear to any one, was not the cause of this incredible inaction—and people constantly asserted that it was not—on whom ought the responsibility to fall?

"After the general rehearsal, there was a conference, at which, it is affirmed, I declared I would not conduct *Rheingold*, even though commanded to do so by the King. This is, in polite terms, disguising the truth. I happened to know that his Majesty had sent a written order to the Intendancy, commanding *Rheingold* to be put upon the stage in exact and conscientious conformity with the intentions and directions of the composer. For this reason, I asked the machinist of the Grand-Duke of Hesse, Herr Brandt, who was present at the conference, whether he could stake his name and professional honour that he could remedy the most striking scenic defects, so that they would not endanger the performance, if it were postponed for a few days. On his declaring formally that this would be impossible with the present arrangements, I said in the precise terms that follow, that: I should consider that I was serving his Majesty ill were I a party to delivering to chance, mutilated and disfigured, a work of which people had talked so much, and prophesied so grandiose an effect. I added that, as long as the task confided to Herr Brandt, by the Intendancy was not carried out, I should consider it my duty towards the public as well as towards the composer, who had entrusted to me his intellectual property, to refuse the musical direction. In so doing, I by no means think I acted as a Wagnerian Musikdirector, as the Intendant's official prints assert, but simply as a man of honour, who sacrifices his position rather than his artistic convictions. Attempts have, it is true, been made to see a crime of lese-majesty in my refusal; but I cannot admit this, when I recollect the generous support his Majesty has afforded to the other creations of the same composer. I did not, a single instant, shut my eyes to the fact that, by my opposition, I was guilty of an offence against the regulations of the Theatre. Herr von Perfall, however, took advantage of his position to inflict upon me the highest punishment those regulations empowered him to inflict: he suspended me from my duties. Instead of hitting me, since I had already sent in my resignation, he rendered impossible, or, at least, doubtful, for the want of a conductor, any subsequent performance of *Rheingold*. I cannot say how far that agrees with his own wishes.

"Immediately after these occurrences, I informed, by telegraph, Herr Wagner of the state of matters. Wagner's telegram, quoted in the party papers, and urging me to resistance, is an invention with a purpose, as well as the despatch, reproduced literally with incredible impudence: 'Ich komme, und Du (!) dirigirst.' Herr Wagner did come to judge personally of the posture of affairs; he came with the most conciliatory intentions, and resolved to suffer all the outrages against his work. But when he was convinced of the intrigue got up against him, he went back, disgusted, to his retirement. He requested

no audience of his Majesty, and, consequently, could not be refused one. During his stay of scarcely four-and-twenty hours, he did not quit his residence one instant, and talked to no person about business, except to Herr Duflipp, who is better able than anybody else to supply information concerning the intentions expressed by him.

"Such is a simple statement of the real facts. I answer for the truth of what I have affirmed, and hope I shall obtain the approval of all who do not see with indifference a frivolous hand attack that which constitutes a man's pride; his honour."

FÉERIES.

While recording the recent productions of the Parisian stage, we have already adverted to the revival of *La Chatte Blanche* and *La Poudre de Perlinpinpin*. There is, however, to English eyes, something so peculiar in pieces of the class to which these belong, something so unlike our Christmas pantomimes, with which they have nevertheless much in common, that we may venture to say a few words more *à propos* of the gaudy spectacles which are now drawing crowds to the Gaité and the Châtelet. Even to the French they appear with a sort of novelty about them. Some time ago a year could not pass without the production of a grand *féerie* at one or two of the theatres commonly devoted to "drama;" but the public at last grew palled by the costly dainties that were thrust upon them, and their distaste corresponded to a feeling of disgust on the part of the managers, who found that they had embarked in speculations demanding so heavy an outlay that even the most brilliant success could scarcely make them remunerative. Last autumn the opinion seemed to prevail that, by the common consent of ruined managers and a weary public, the *féerie* had become matter of history, never again to be resuscitated, and playgoers were congratulated on an improvement in their taste which had caused them to reject gaudy absurdity and to content themselves with dramatic fare more nutritious to the intellect and less onerous to the treasury. However, here we are *en pleine féerie* again, and he who wishes to see the senseless glories of the Gaité and the Châtelet must secure his seat in good time.

In its foundation the normal *féerie* strongly resembles the English burlesque, more especially the burlesque of Mr. Planché. A fairy tale is selected or invented as the plot of the piece, and the dialogue is written in a spirit of badinage. The personages, however, talk in prose, verse being confined to the songs and choruses which are liberally introduced. When we turn from the foundation of the *féerie* to its superstructure the resemblance to Mr. Planché's burlesque vanishes altogether. In the latter the story is always kept in view, and it is one of the merits of Mr. Planché that while he freely indulges in spirits of fancy, he adheres so closely to his fairy tale that children who cannot understand his pleasantries can accept his work as a dramatic reproduction of the stories that have delighted them at home. Many of our modern burlesques are constructed on a looser principle, being obviously written for the purpose of exhibiting splendid scenery and the female form at one theatre, and for the sake of grotesque dramas at another. Nevertheless, it may be taken as a rule that the outline is never forgotten. In the French *féerie* on the other hand, the story is a mere pretext for introducing the characters upon the stage, and this task performed, the authors may do whatever they please, and drag in by the head and shoulders any eccentricity that in their opinion will hit the capricious taste of the public. On this account it may be compared to the English pantomime, particularly to the pantomime of those days when the harlequinade had not sunk into a mere appendage to the so-called "introduction." The personages are not indeed turned into harlequin and columbine, nor do they pursue their vagaries among the shops of Paris like our clown and pantaloons when they insult and rob the London tradesmen. The fanciful is never abandoned for a caricature of the actual, but with this reservation there is no limit to free wandering, and the tale which gives the work its title has no more to do with the most attractive scenes than a harlequin who dances round the station at Charing-cross has to do with the Sinbad who plunges into the Valley of Diamonds. Of grotesque dances of the "breakdown" kind the patrons of the *féerie* have no notion; but what they chiefly seek is a grand ballet, which may be attractive from two causes—either because it freely exhibits the female form, or because it combines on a large scale a throng of fantastic figures. It is to the number and character of their ballets that the directors of the Gaité and the Châtelet direct attention when they wish to invite the public to their doors. In *La Chatte Blanche* the gem is a terpsichorean episode, supposed to take place in the "Kingdom of Birds," where ladies become so far feathered that they do not compromise their personal charms, and where the more serious business of dancing is relieved by a comic little farce in dumb show, in which a duel fought by two cocks, rival lovers of a single hen, is cleverly represented by children, and a party of jovial canaries reel home in a state of inebriety. *La Poudre de Per-*

linpinpin boasts of a *ballet des potiches*, all the figures in which are supposed to be made of porcelain, and of a *ballet du diable d'or*, in which Mamma appears as a very charming young lady attired in a scanty garment of gold fringe.

It is a notable fact that these *féeries* are seldom absolutely new. *La Chatte Blanche* was originally brought out in 1852, *La Poudre de Perlinpinpin* in 1853, and *La Biche au Bois*, which made so much noise some three years ago, was more than twenty years old. But on the occasion of each revival the piece is as good as new, its loose structure facilitating any omission or introduction of scenes that may be deemed expedient. The *ballet des oiseaux*, which is now the grand feature of *La Chatte Blanche*, is a substitute for a *ballet des poissons*, executed when the piece was first brought out. In 1852, the same *féerie* tolerably embodied the story of Fortunio, supplemented by that of the *White Cat*. In 1869 stories of the Countess d'Aubigny are equally disregarded, and it is only now and then that we are reminded of their existence.

By the mass of figures presented to the eye, by the brilliancy of the costumes, and the admirable dancing, the two *féeries* will chiefly impress an English spectator, but he will be disappointed by the painter's contribution to the general splendour. Imposing as they are, there is nothing in the decorations comparable to our best "transformation scenes" or fairy landscapes, nothing that will induce us to admit that our Beverley, Grieve, Calcott, or Telbin has been approached, much less excelled. The length of the *féeries* is surprising. Each of them occupies the whole of the evening, without the assistance of a short farce or vaudeville, though they both commence at a quarter after seven. *La Chatte Blanche* is quite as long as M. Sardou's *Patrie*! and *La Poudre de Perlinpinpin* much longer. Allowance must, of course, be made for those enormous *entr'actes* which the French, pleased to stretch their legs by vacating their seats at least twice in the course of an evening, not only tolerate, but relish. Still, after all deductions, the length remains tremendous, furnishing a strong instance of the patience of the Gaul when engaged upon his amusements.

It is probable that these huge buffooneries are to the taste rather of the provincial French than of the Parisians proper. They are generally brought out in the last month before the theatrical season has commenced in earnest, when the inhabitants of the capital are supposed to be bathing or drinking water, and those of the provinces flock to Paris. However that may be, their attractive power is vast. There is a story that a cobbler a few evenings ago shut up his shop, and set up a paper outside, informing his customers that he was gone to see *La Chatte Blanche*. This is doubtless a *charge*, but it perfectly harmonizes with the spectacle that presents itself every evening in front of the Gaité and the Châtelet after six o'clock. N. D.

BREMEN.—The Stadttheater re-opened with Beethoven's *Fidelio*.

COBURG.—On the 1st October, Herr Hofmann's comic one-act opera, *Cartouche*, will be produced at the Ducal Theatre.

DARMSTADT.—*Die Vestalin*, by Spontini, has been revived with considerable splendour and some success.

KREUZNACH.—In celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the Royal Gymnasium, a performance of Sophocles' *Antigone*, in the original Greek, with Mendelsohn's music, was given by the pupils of the institution.

MUNICH.—It appears that Herr von Perfall gave his Majesty of Bavaria to understand that he must make up his mind to see Herr R. Wagner's influence summarily terminated, or to accept his (Herr von Perfall's) resignation. His Bavarian Majesty chose the former alternative.

BADEN.—A unique operatic performance was given, a short time since, at Madame Viardot's villa. The opera was *Le dernier des Sorciers*; the performers being Madame Viardot, who composed the music; M. Turgenieff, who wrote the book; Madame Viardot's fair pupils, and Madame Viardot's son, a young gentleman of fourteen. The only man's part, that of the old Sorcerer, was sustained by M. Turgenieff. As, however, he cannot sing, the vocal music belonging to the part was sung behind the scenes by Herr von Milde, from Weimar, M. Turgenieff, making the corresponding gestures upon the stage, nay, upon the execution of *roulades*, opening his mouth and fetching breath as though he were really singing.

BOLOGNA.—According to the Italian paper, *La Fama*, Signor Scalaberni, the manager of the theatre here, will produce next winter an unknown opera, *Giovanna d'Arco*, by no less a composer than Rossini himself, who is said to have written it more than thirty years ago, to a libretto by M. Léon Pillet, formerly manager of the Grand Opéra, Paris. *Gli vivra verra*.—Preparations are being made to produce Herr R. Wagner's *Lohengrin*. If the experiment proves successful, the Scala, Milan, will follow suit either with the same opera, or with *Die Meistersinger*. This would be sad news, indeed, for poor Italy, unless there was an "if" in the case; we know, however, from Touchstone, that there is "much virtue in if."

REVIEWS.

The Organist's Quarterly Journal of Original Compositions. Edited by W. SPARK, Mus. Doc. [London: Novello, Ewer, & Co.]

THE third number of this important serial opens with an *Andante serioso* by Herr Carl Reinecke, in which we see little to admire beyond a successful attempt at uncommon effects. Those who play Herr Reinecke's *Andante* once, are not likely to be drawn to it a second time. Two themes (both *Andante*) by Mr. Henry Hiles, are well-made music, not particularly original, but decidedly pleasing and adapted to be useful. The *Andante* which forms the slow movement of Mr. G. A. Macfarren's sonata, is lengthy, clever, and dry. There are many pretty things in Merrel's *Pastorale*; and Mr. E. G. Monk's *Andante sostenuto*, is tuneful, well laid out for the instrument, and not too difficult. We confess that the number, as a whole, disappoints us. Dr. Spark, who himself plays a concert organ, must not imagine that organists generally are in want of concert pieces. It will be better for his journal if he give a good proportion of compositions adapted for church use, and partaking of the gravity and dignity of church music.

Military March, for two performers on one pianoforte. Composed by ERNST LEWEN SCHULZE. [London: Duncan Davison & Co.]

WELL marked, vigorous themes, with plain and massive harmonies here satisfy the exigencies of military music. The March is easy, and affords excellent practice for moderate players.

Maiden, wrap thy Mantle round thee. Canzonet. Poetry by KIRKE WHITE. Music by GEORGE GAFF. [London: Duncan Davison & Co.]

WE have here a very graceful setting of White's poetry. The music is skilfully constructed by one who knows perfectly well what he is about. Mr. Gaff is a stranger to us, but we are glad to make his acquaintance in so pleasant a fashion.

O Lady, twine no wreath for me. Song. Poetry by SIR WALTER SCOTT. Music by W. FRIEDRICH. [London: Duncan Davison & Co.]

A SIMPLE song, but expressive, and one with which a good singer could do much. It has many of the elements of popularity.

Choral Songs. (S. A. T. B.) Composed by E. A. SYDENHAM. No. 1, "The Parting Kiss;" No. 2, "When the rosy morn." [London: Novello, Ewer, & Co.]

THE first of these compositions has considerable merit. Though little more than a harmonized melody, the music is well put together, and the effect pleasing. For the second we have not so much to say. It is commonplace, and bare of character.

—O—
W A I F S.

MADAME Arabella Goddard has given Pianoforte Recitals this week at Great Malvern and Swindon. On Tuesday she commences a fortnight's tour at Scarborough. "The 'Queen of Pianists'!"—says a Yorkshire paper—"is about to visit the 'Queen of Watering Places,' where she is pretty sure of finding as many liege subjects as in any part of her art-dominions."

The Leipzig Gewandhaus concerts begin October 7th.

Tamberlick is engaged for next season at the Italian opera, Madrid.

Signor Schira has returned from Milan. His new opera is finished, and he is hardly at work upon another.

Bader, the Nestor of German tenors, has just died at Baden, at the age of eighty.

M. Alfred Beaumont, director of the Opéra-Comique in 1860-61, died lately at Caen.

M. Lafont has returned to Paris, after a long stay at watering-places on the English coast.

The statue of Verdi is shortly to be "inaugurated" at the Busseto Theatre with much ceremony.

An operetta by Offenbach, *Les Oies du Capitole*, will be played at the Bouffes in the course of the winter.

Una Notte di Novembre, the new opera by Signor Iremonger, has been favourably received in the Teatro Ré of Milan.

Miss Maria Stocken has been assisting Mrs. Stirling at her "Readings," during the week, at Leeds, Sheffield, and Whitby.

The first performance of M. Joncière's *Dernier Jour de Pompéi* was announced for Wednesday week last, in spite of the serious illness of M. Padeloup.

Madame Rossini has given up to the chorus and band of the Opéra, the places to which she is entitled at each performance of a work by her late husband.

Yet another opera on the subject of Alessandro Stradella! The latest setting is by Signor Francesco Garzilli, and has just been published at Naples.

Rumour hath it that M. Gounod is at work upon an opera founded on Corneille's *Polyeucte*. What then of *Les Deux Reines* and *Francesco di Rimini*? Are these put aside?

Mlle. Zina Dalti, said to be possessed of remarkable talent and beauty, and engaged at the Paris Opéra-Comique, has just made a favourable *début* at Brussels.

La France announces that *Rheingold* has been produced at last. The performance is said to have been excellent, the success doubtful, and the whole report needs confirmation.

The little Athénée theatre has re-opened with *Le Docteur Crispin* of the Brothers Ricci—a trifle much more in place there than at Covent Garden, where it was played some two years ago.

M. Bagier announces a series of *représentation concerts*, wherein historical and classical works will be given with the aid of dresses and scenery. As yet he is not more explicit.

After the general rehearsal of the music performed at the inauguration of the Brussels Gare du Midi, M. Vieuxtemps was "chaired" to his hotel on the shoulders of the workmen.

La Belle Hélène has been revived at the Variétés, with M. Dupuis and several members of the original cast. But Mlle. Aimée, the latest Helen does not please so well as Mlle. Schneider.

Herr Rubinstein is completing a pianoforte fantasia, in four movements, and a cantata, *The Tower of Babel*. The latter is to be made available for stage representation, and is to be heard, for the first time, at Vienna, in January.

Mr. Frederic Penna leaves for Italy next week, to make arrangements for the completion of the musical education of his daughter, who is said to possess great musical talent, and moreover, to be gifted with a voice of singular beauty.

Miss Adelaide Phillipps is at Marshfield, Massachusetts, in attendance at the bed side of her father, who is dangerously ill. Miss Phillipps has given up her Paris engagement, and refuses all offers of business, on account of domestic trouble and duty.

As all theatres seem built expressly to perish by fire, it was a clever administrative arrangement to place one of the finest picture galleries in the world, that of Dresden, next to the theatre, which was burnt to the ground last week. The gallery was saved, but with difficulty. —*Athenæum*.

The Concerts Populaires of M. Padeloup, and the Concerts du Conservatoire, which both take place on Sunday, are to meet with opposition this winter in some entertainments on the same day which Herr Litloff is organizing. The projected concerts are to be given in some large theatre, and young composers are to have unusual facilities for bringing their works under public notice.

Miss Augusta Thomson, who has been on a starring tour in the north of England, has accepted an engagement at the Olympic Theatre, and will appear in an operetta and a new farce. She is so admirable a singer and actress that the London boards cannot easily spare her. Miss Augusta Thomson has also made her mark as a dramatist, having produced, during her tour, some three or four successful pieces.

Although music was only one of the numerous subjects on which Otto Jahn laboured, his death must not pass unnoticed in these columns, if only on account of the exhaustive *Life of Mozart*, which he recently gave to the world, and of his many interesting essays on musical matters. His *Mozart* is one of the most elaborate and precise biographies ever written. Its value as a book of reference could not be overestimated. —*Athenæum*.

We (*Pall Mall Gazette*) understand that a project is now on foot for converting the Royal Colosseum, Regent's Park, into an operahouse. There will be five principal entrances, and five tiers of boxes; and to render the corridor more attractive as a lounge between the acts they will be adapted for the exhibition of pictures, which will be reserved, if desired, for sale. An important feature of the scheme is an underground communication with the new operahouse and the Metropolitan Railway.

The provision of amusement for the city of Lima in August, was an occasional concert, a fair Italian opera, the Spanish Theatre, besides Walker's American Circus, in the Jardin d'Aurore. The Peruvians have, however, diminished their musical establishments, as two of their leading artists—Senora Larumbe, "a splendid mezzo-soprano," accompanied by Herr Franchel, "a pianist of first-class order"—had left for the United States, taking Guayaquil, in Ecuador, and the city of Panama as concert-stations on their way.

"Madame Anna Bishop," says *Watson's Art Journal*, of Sept. 4th, "arrived on Sunday last in this city from her protracted and extended tour round the world, looking younger and handsomer than ever. She has given concerts in every town and city in China, Japan, British India, Oregon, California, Sandwich Islands, Society Islands, Asia Minor, Africa, to say nothing of England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, and every other part of the habitable globe, and returns to New York to settle down and be a permanent resident, and will shortly open a vocal academy for the instruction of young ladies in musical matters."

We read in *Watson*, of Sept. 4th:—"Our trusty and well beloved cousin and friend, the London *Musical World* might have spared the amiable *Ruchette* its reproof anent the words à la semaine prochaine, it ought to have seen as we—our lacerated selves—quiveringly saw, that it was a typographical agony, and that *semaine prochaine* was intended. It was not, alas! the only massacre of the innocent phrases of *Ruchette* committed by the Herods of the press, but the printers are now becoming more accustomed to the MS., and the errors—thank the Lord!—are less frequent."—We accept the explanation with sympathy, as those who have also suffered.

"The New American opera which is to be performed at Brooklyn next month, has the following striking title: *Moolta, or the Indian Witch*. The scene is laid in Salem, during the time of the famous witch troubles. The libretto is the work of Mr. Edward de Nyse, the editor of the *Telegram*, we believe, and the music is by Mr. E. B. Moore, city editor of the *New York Tribune*. It is intended to secure the services of the best artists available for the production of this work, and we (*Watson*) sincerely hope that the united genius of two press-men will give to the world a work which will do honour to American Art."

The Académie de Musique and the Opéra-Comique refused M. Bagier permission to bring out any of their works upon his Italian stage, on the plea that he is in receipt of a subvention from the French Government. Surely he is on that very account justified in promoting the greater glory of the French school. If he can by transplantation to the Italiens, create a popularity for such works as Halévy's *Guido et Ginevra* and Felicien David's *Pêrle du Brésil*, he must increase the musical reputation of the country. Moreover, he proposes to facilitate in return the performances at the other lyric theatres. Under the circumstances, it would seem that the national establishments had taken a lesson from the fable of the dog in the manger.

The gentleman who does the "Hymenities" in *Watson's Art Journal* must have written the following after festivities at "Hoyt Villa":—

"The graceful, lady-like bearing of the bride (Miss Susie Sprague Hoyt) charmed all who beheld her; robed in virgin white, with a simple bridal veil, she was indeed pleasant to gaze upon, and the mind, the music breathing from her face, suggested to us, being a musical journal—that her passage from single to married life was as if a charmingly-gracious melody, suddenly, but sweetly, and by harmonious modulations, became a tender duet, to flow on—we trust—in happy numbers, in unchanging concord, until the final chords be struck by the Angel of Death, till the celestial diapason be sounded, and the joyful song of life shall resolve itself into the key of your bright world to come, and mingle with the everlasting harmonies of heaven."

But our cousin's contributor can be comic as well as sentimental. Here is a specimen of the former vein!—

"Portland, but two short weeks ago, rejoiced in a young lady, who rejoiced in the name of Arabine O'Coffin!—Alpha and Omega!—she might as well have been called Dan and Beersheba! what a conjunction! a given name 'Arabine' redolent of all the 'spicy breezes of the East, poetically and euphoniously suggesting Araby the blest, to be brought to an abrupt and gloomy conclusion by a Coffin! O'Coffin! wherefore art thou Coffin? the fair Arabine possibly and justifiably exclaimed; and, being a wise virgin, she naturally bethought herself of a bridegroom, as a happy means of annihilating her melancholy patronymic. Andrew Bradbury being 'to the fore,' and the fair Arabine gracefully consenting, the Coffin part of the arrangement (uncomfortable piece of furniture at a wedding), was borne to the church, the church doors opened, 'let in a Coffin that out a Coffin never departed more,' and Andrew and Arabine Bradbury joyously set out on their pleasant wedding tour, and the two will tour till to her home he takes her."

L'Opinion Nationale tells a good story of Rossini and the late Charles Maurice. When Rossini first arrived in Paris he was furiously assailed by Maurice in the hope that the composer would pay for the journalist's silence. But Rossini took no notice, and Maurice eventually ignored him altogether. One day at Madame Pasta's house, the two men met face to face, and Rossini had a characteristic revenge:—"Oh! Monsieur," said he, "I am delighted to make the acquaintance of a man with such a fertile imagination. But I have a little reproach against you—how long it is since you took any notice of me. That annoys and distresses me, for my greatest pleasure was to read every day the ingenious things you were good enough to write about me. It

was the necessary dessert to every breakfast. What have I done to annoy you, that you deprive me of so lively a pleasure. I beg you, Monsieur, do not neglect me, if you have the least regard for my happiness." Then turning to Madame Pasta, the maestro said: "Judith, join your prayers to mine, that Monsieur will no longer distress me by his silence." Maurice fled precipitately.

La Petite Fadette deserves a better fate than is probably in store for it. When the novel first appeared, some twenty years ago, it was speedily dramatized by MM. Anicet Bourgeois and Charles Lafont, for the Variétés, while the incidental music was written by a young musician, then unknown—M. Theodore Semet. Madame George Sand, having failed in her single attempt at dramatic composition, *Cosima*, would not at that time risk a second venture. She has since become a famous playwright, and now, calling to her aid M. Michel Carré, has converted her exquisite idyll into a libretto, confiding to M. Semet its musical setting. Some of the incidents in M. Maillart's *Dragons de Villars* were suggested by *La Petite Fadette*, so that the original author has actually been hampered by her imitators. The present work is in three acts.—Landry, the lover of Fanehon, being driven mad by her absence, for no better reason than to be restored to sanity by her return, so as to supply materials for an additional scene. Not a note of the music originally played at the Variétés is to be found in the present work. M. Semet excels in song-writing, his themes being generally spontaneous; but in the more ambitious portions of his works he disappoints. The instrumentation, however, is uniformly good. Not one of M. Semet's successes as an operatic composer—*Les Nuits d'Espagne*, *La Demoiselle d'Honneur*, *Gil Blas*, nor *Ondine*—has induced him to give up his occupation as "drummer" in the orchestra of the Grand Opéra. Madame Galli-Marié acted charmingly as Fadette, and the opera altogether was well given.—*Athenæum*.

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